



TISBURY

Dukes County



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NARRATIVE

Narrative

The Town of Tisbury is a resort community on the north shore of Martha's Vineyard. In 1663, Indians sold West Chop to whites and the first permanent European settlement was made in 1674, although European explorers, traders and fishermen had roamed the area from early in the 16th century. Gosnold, among other explorers, recorded his impressions during a voyage in

1602. The area abounded in shellfish, striped bass, bluefish and swordfish and drew Indians as well as Europeans for offshore fishing as well as to the massive herring runs.

Early settlers relied on agriculture, grazing and raising hay for cattle but the town grew very slowly. By 1700 there were only three families in Tisbury with a total of 27 people; in 1775 there were only 45 families with 225 people. In 1787 there were 21 licensed inn holders, again clearly servicing a transient population much larger than the permanent one and certainly foreshadowing the town's modern character. Residents managed the port, fishing boats and salt works and the town built deep water wharves in 1836 as well as two marine railways to facilitate boat handling. The first submarine telegraph line was laid across Vineyard Sound to West Chop in 1856, significantly improving communications for townspeople. Residents fished for whales and operated 125 farms at the end of the 19th century but by the turn of the century, Tisbury had shifted from a maritime to a land economy and were operating a steam corn factory, embossing leather, building harnesses and raising poultry and fruit.

By the 1950's, the town had established its modern character, which relies heavily on the servicing of a growing and affluent summer community which continues to build large summer homes on the island. Fishing and farming are still carried on to a lesser degree.

(Seal supplied by community. Narrative based on information provided by the

Massachusetts Historical Commission)



GEOGRAPHY

Location

Located on the northernmost portion of Martha's Vineyard, an island 20 miles long and 10 miles wide situated five miles south of the southwest tip of Cape Cod. Tisbury is bordered by Vineyard Sound on the north, Oak Bluffs on the east and south, and West Tisbury on the west.

Total Area: 8.05 sq. miles

Land Area: 6.56 sq. miles

Population: 3,120

Density: 476 per sq. mile

Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Edgartown Station)

Normal temperature in January.....29.3°F

Normal temperature in July.....69.8°F

Normal annual precipitation.....45.3"

U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

Vineyard Haven

Regional Planning Agency

Martha's Vineyard

Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)



GOVERNMENT

Municipal Offices

Main Number: (508) 696-4200

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Form of Government

Board of Selectmen
Executive Secretary
Open Town Meeting

Year Incorporated

As a town: 1671

Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%	
Total Registered	2,047		
Democrats	596	29.1	%
Republicans	287	14.0	%
Other parties	1	0.0	%
Unenrolled Voters	1,163	56.8	%

Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Geographic Area: Tisbury town, Dukes County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	3,755	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	3,755	100.0
Male.....	1,758	46.8	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	39	1.0
Female.....	1,997	53.2	Mexican.....	17	0.5
Under 5 years.....	187	5.0	Puerto Rican.....	5	0.1
5 to 9 years.....	185	4.9	Cuban.....	2	0.1
10 to 14 years.....	268	7.1	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	15	0.4
15 to 19 years.....	228	6.1	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	3,716	99.0
20 to 24 years.....	144	3.8	White alone.....	3,350	89.2
25 to 34 years.....	418	11.1	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	657	17.5	Total population.....	3,755	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	648	17.3	In households.....	3,644	97.0
55 to 59 years.....	203	5.4	Householder.....	1,646	43.8
60 to 64 years.....	144	3.8	Spouse.....	674	17.9
65 to 74 years.....	318	8.5	Child.....	922	24.6
75 to 84 years.....	258	6.9	Own child under 18 years.....	728	19.4
85 years and over.....	97	2.6	Other relatives.....	138	3.7
Median age (years).....	42.0	(X)	Under 18 years.....	55	1.5
18 years and over.....	2,948	78.5	Nonrelatives.....	264	7.0
Male.....	1,343	35.8	Unmarried partner.....	86	2.3
Female.....	1,605	42.7	In group quarters.....	111	3.0
21 years and over.....	2,859	76.1	Institutionalized population.....	92	2.5
62 years and over.....	756	20.1	Noninstitutionalized population.....	19	0.5
65 years and over.....	673	17.9	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	239	6.4	Total households.....	1,646	100.0
Female.....	434	11.6	Family households (families).....	902	54.8
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	419	25.5
One race.....	3,607	96.1	Married-couple family.....	674	40.9
White.....	3,381	90.0	With own children under 18 years.....	295	17.9
Black or African American.....	111	3.0	Female householder, no husband present.....	169	10.3
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	51	1.4	With own children under 18 years.....	89	5.4
Asian.....	12	0.3	Nonfamily households.....	744	45.2
Asian Indian.....	-	-	Householder living alone.....	604	36.7
Chinese.....	8	0.2	Householder 65 years and over.....	223	13.5
Filipino.....	-	-	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	457	27.8
Japanese.....	-	-	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	454	27.6
Korean.....	2	0.1	Average household size.....	2.21	(X)
Vietnamese.....	1	-	Average family size.....	2.92	(X)
Other Asian ¹	1	-	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	2	0.1	Total housing units.....	2,720	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	1	-	Occupied housing units.....	1,646	60.5
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	-	-	Vacant housing units.....	1,074	39.5
Samoa.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander ²	1	-	occasional use.....	965	35.5
Some other race.....	50	1.3	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	2.0	(X)
Two or more races.....	148	3.9	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	2.5	(X)
<i>Race alone or in combination with one</i>			HOUSING TENURE		
<i>or more other races: ³</i>			Occupied housing units.....	1,646	100.0
White.....	3,511	93.5	Owner-occupied housing units.....	1,061	64.5
Black or African American.....	152	4.0	Renter-occupied housing units.....	585	35.5
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	79	2.1	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.37	(X)
Asian.....	19	0.5	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	1.93	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	7	0.2			
Some other race.....	142	3.8			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

¹ Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

² Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

³ In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Home Sales (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

Subsidized Housing Units (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

Public Housing Units (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State: 0

Conventional Federal: 0

Rental Assistance(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP: 0

Federal (Section 8): 0



TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Tisbury is located on Martha's Vineyard. Ferry service is the vital link to and from the Island. The Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority provides year-round ferry service.

Major Highways

The principal highways are State Road and the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road.

Rail

There is no freight or passenger rail service on Martha's Vineyard.

Bus

Tisbury is a member of the Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority (MVTA). The MVTA provides paratransit services to the elderly and disabled, primarily through Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands. Island Transport provides fixed route bus service to other towns on the island during the tourist season. Taxicabs are an integral part of the Island's public transportation system.

Other

The Martha's Vineyard Airport is a Primary Commercial Service (PR) facility with scheduled passenger service. It has a 3,297'x 150' and a 5,499'x 150' asphalt runway. Instrument approaches available: Precision and non-precision.



CULTURE AND RECREATION

LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

None

RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Recreational Facilities (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



MISCELLANEOUS

HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

Hospitals

None

Long Term Care

None

Hospices

None

Rest Homes

None

UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.